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Board of Assessors Conducting Inspections, more information and FAQs

The Department of Revenue requires the Assessors' Office to; maintain a property database, update properties when; building permits are issued, properties are sold, business change and the cyclical recollection of data. An interior inspection is an important factor in determining an equitable and accurate assessment for your property. The Department of Revenue mandates every property in Massachusetts be inspected at least once every ten (10) years.

What is the purpose of the Property Inspections?

The purpose of property inspections is to ensure that the physical data on each property is accurate. It is the property data, along with the annual analysis of "arms-length"* real estate sales and market conditions, that is the basis for our valuation model, which is used to establish annual assessments. Our goal is to produce assessments that are fair and equitable, accurate data is essential in achieving this goal.

What is the process of these inspections?

The data collectors will be inspecting properties with building permits that have been recently issued or completed. The data collector will be provided a property record card for each home that contains a sketch of the property and the various physical attributes that need verification. The data collector's job is simply to verify and update our data we have regarding the home. Please note the data collector does NOT determine the value of your property. New assessments are determined by analysis of market conditions by the Assessors annually.

What does the inspection consist of?

The data collector will verify the exterior dimensions of the property and may take exterior photos. Interior inspections will be necessary to verify data such as room count, number of bedroom(s), bath(s) & fireplace(s), status of basement & attic spaces. They will be verifying the condition of kitchen(s) & bath(s) along with overall condition of the property. No interior photos will be taken.

Do I have to let the data collector into my property?

Inspections are voluntary. The Board of Assessors' asks that you have an understanding of what they are trying to accomplish – fair and equitable assessments- and asks for your cooperation in fulfilling their duties.

What is the benefit of allowing the data collector in the property?

Your assessment is based on data obtained from the previous cyclical inspections & permits, which could be outdated. Fair and equitable assessments are dependent on accurate data and if we are not allowed entry, we must estimate your interior information, including overall condition of the property. Estimating any type of information can result in inaccurate assessments. The goal is to make sure all properties are assessed fairly and equitably.

What if I am not home when the data collector arrives?

We understand that the visit may not be at a "good time". To address this issue, a door tag will be left to allow homeowners to set up an appointment at a time more convenient for them.

Are you trying to raise taxes?

These inspections are not an effort to raise taxes. The amount the Town can tax is regulated by Proposition 2 1/2, and the budget is voted annually at Town Meeting. The goal of property assessments is to ensure that we are treating all property owners fairly and equitably, so each property owner is paying their "fair share" of the tax burden.

*An "arm's length" sale is a sale between a willing buyer and a willing seller with no unusual circumstances involved in the sale. These are transactions in which unrelated and unaffiliated parties are involved in the sale.